

II. Remarks

To highlight the distinction of the above referenced invention over the prior art as interpreted by the Examiner in the Office Action of June 2, 2004, Paper No.05232004, Claim 1 was cancelled. Method Claims 19 through 22 will remain as originally filed in the preliminary amendment accompanying the filing of the continuation application.

In the Office Action, the Examiner objected to Claim 16 because in line 10, the word "an" should be changed to "a". Since Claim 16 was cancelled from this application in the preliminary amendment, the objection to this claim is moot and accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this objection be withdrawn.

The Examiner further rejected Claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. According to the Examiner there is insufficient antecedent basis for the limitation of "the flexible fingers" in lines 11-12 since the independent claim gives no indication that the previously recited cantilevered fingers are flexible.

In the preliminary amendment, Claims 2-18 were cancelled. Further, in this Office Action, Claim 1 has also been cancelled. Accordingly, it is respectfully suggested that the rejection of Claims 1-18 under 35 U.S.C. §112 is now moot.

The Office Action further sets forth the rejection of Claims 1 and 8 as being anticipated under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)(1) by Eikhoff, U.S. Patent No. 6,402,254 B1. In response to this rejection, it is respectfully noted that the preliminary amendment cancelled Claim 8

while this response also canceled Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C §102(e)(1) is now moot.

The Examiner indicated allowable subject matter in Claims 2-7 as well as 9-18. Since these claims were cancelled in the preliminary amendment, it is respectfully suggested that the status of these claims is now moot.

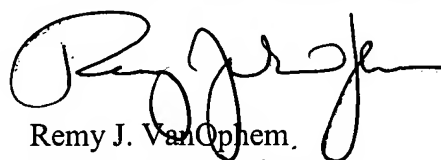
In the preliminary amendment, independent method Claim 19 as well as dependent Claims 20-22 were submitted for examination. For some reason, these claims were overlooked and not indicated in the disposition of the claims to be considered in the application. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner consider Claims 19-22, the only claims remaining in the application for examination.

It is sincerely believed that independent Claim 19 is patentably distinct from any reference of record in this application as well as the parent application and accordingly, it is respectfully requested that Claims 19-22 be allowed.

If the Examiner has any questions with respect to any matter now of record, Applicant's attorney may be reached at (586) 739-7445.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Remy J. VanOphem', is written over the printed name.

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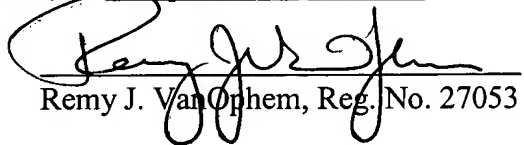
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Date: September 2, 2004


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